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ABSTRACT

Incorporating elements of humanist, Piagetian, psychodynamic, and behaviorist perspectives of child development, this guide for preschool teachers explores several topics related to curriculum planning for 4-year-old children. Chapter 1 points out the significance of the curriculum study, defines terms, and identifies assumptions and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 summarizes different perspectives of human development, adopts an eclectic approach to curriculum planning, and discusses ideas about child development related to curriculum planning for 4-year-olds. Components of the curriculum are discussed which promote physical, socioemotional, and cognitive growth and development; suggested orientations for planning in each area of development are described. Chapter 3 emphasizes the importance of planning classroom observation and evaluation activities. In chapter 4 parent involvement in the preschool program is briefly discussed. A summary, as well as conclusions and recommendations, is provided in the fifth and final chapter. Related materials are appended, including samples of a plan for a year-long program for 4- to 5-year-old children, observation forms and checklists, and a developmental profile. (RH)

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APPROPRIATE PLANNING OF A PREPRIMARY CURRICULUM FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS

by

Evelyn Ann Petersen

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Some programs operate in a highly structured manner with curriculums based on cognitive objectives which may be inappropriate for the developmental needs of the children in the programs. On the other hand, some operate with little or no thought to cognitive or affective objectives and with weak curriculum planning. Some program directors and teachers have strong backgrounds in child development theory and practice; some have little or no background in this field.

Since the interest in early childhood and the funding for programs is increasing somewhat more rapidly than the inconsistencies in standards for these programs can be resolved, it is vital that those persons with expertise in this field take a strong child advocate role and give input to decision makers on what kinds of program planning alternatives are appropriate to the developmental needs or children.

In order for this to occur, persons with expertise in this field must work together to explore and to share appropriate curriculum alternatives. Curriculum planning alternatives, as well as observation, evaluation, and parent involvement alternatives should be developed and shared among early childhood educators. This kind of sharing should raise the standards of quality in planned programs for young children.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is urgent that early childhood educators work together and share comprehensive and appropriate curriculum plans with decision makers because of the rapid growth of this segment of the American educational system and its significance

to our society. The National Center for Education Statistics issued a report in 1975 documenting this rapid growth. A summary of this report states:

> Reflecting a sizable reduction in the birth rate in recent years, the number of children three through five in the United States declined from 12.5 million in 1964 to 11.4 million in 1969 and to 10.4 million in 1974...On the other hand, the number of these children enrolled in preprimary programs increased from 3.2 million in 1964 to 3.9 million in 1969 and to 4.7 million in 1974. Thus there was a 47 percent rise in enrollment during the same period that the number of children in the appropriate age group was decreasing by 17 percent...The percent of four year olds in school increased two and one half times during the decade. The enrollment of five year olds started from a much higher base but also increased substantially to 79 percent in 1974. Overall, the proportion of three to five year olds enrolled in preprimary programs rose from one-fourth in 1964 to 45 percent in 1974. Clearly, preprimary education is one of the most dynamic and rapidly developing segments of the American educational system.[1]

There are many reasons for the increase of interest in and numbers of preprimary programs. The disappearance of the extended family has caused many parents to seek information and help with child rearing from sources such as early childhood centers and programs.

The women's liberation movement as well as economic conditions have caused a large increase of women in the labor force. In families where both parents work and no relatives can care for the children, there is a need for preschool children to be cared for in some sort of preprimary or child

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[1] National Center for Education Statistics, "Statistic of the Month: Enrollment in Preprimary Programs," American Education, Vol. 11, No. 10 (December, 1975), back cover.

care program. By 1980 working mothers of preschool children are expected to increase by over 1.5 million. Even though the facilities for preschool children have been expanding and the number of places in licensed facilities for children has increased by 450,000 in the past five years, the number of children under six whose mothers are working has also increased by 800,000 in that same period.[2]

The national interest in the prevention of educational failure has also influenced the growth of programs. Head Start and Home Start are still much in evidence; in addition, there are many new Title I preschool programs. Public kindergartens are increasing in number, as are public school programs for four year olds. Mandatory programs in special education for ages 0 to 25 in Michigan and other states have also percipitated new preschool programs.

The emergence of child abuse as a national concern, as well as the increase of recent research and writing on the importance of good parenting, have created many new formal and informal parent and child programs. Some high schools have begun parenting classes for regular students and teenage parents. Many of the increasing numbers of vocational education centers offer child care training programs including preschool centers as labs in which high school students work and learn. More and more kits, books, tapes and filmstrips about parenting and child development are being published.

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[2] Education Commission of the States - Early Childhood Project Report No. 15, The Role of the Family in Child Development: Implications for State Policies and Programs, (Denver: Government Printing Office, December, 1975), p. 21.

The Report of the National Conference on Parent and Early Childhood Education in Denver in May, 1975, stated that our society needs and demands more parent and early childhood education programs because of the "nineteen million children living below the poverty line, four million children in single parent families, and three million children emotionally disturbed enough to need professional help."[3]

It appears that decision makers and leaders in education do recognize the significance of early childhood programs to our society and are concerned that these programs operate with appropriate curriculums.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

In this paper the definitions of terms used are those adopted by the Michigan State Board of Education in February, 1976. This definition and adoption of terminology was deemed necessary because "the care and education of the young child outside of and within the home environment has become a priority concern at state and national levels."[4]

Early childhood education as defined by the State Board of Education "is the providing of purposeful activities, public or private, aimed at guiding the physical, emotional,

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[3] United States Office of Education, Report of the National Conference on Parent and Early Childhood Education, (Denver; U. S. Government Printing Office, May, 1975), p. 21.

[4] Michigan State Board of Education, "Directions in Early Childhood Education - Age Limits, Purpose, Program Components, and Terminology," (Lansing: State Department of Education, February, 1976), p. 1.

intellectual and social development of the young child, 0-9 years of age or through the third grade...The 0-9 year old span includes a span of years containing certain developmental continuities...Early childhood education includes preprimary programs, being pre-kindergarten and kindergarten; and primary programs for ages 6-9 years. The types of programs vary greatly, even within the private and public sectors."[5]

In Michigan all pre-kindergarten programs are licensed by the Department of Social Services as child care centers. The term child care center includes a variety of pre-kindergarten programs such as day care centers, nursery schools, Montessori centers, cooperative nurseries, infant-toddler programs and child development centers. Vocational education child care training labs, Title I programs, and Headstart pre-kindergarten programs are funded and administered entirely by public funding sources, but they are also licensed by the Department of Social Services.

"Although the technical definition of preprimary programs includes kindergarten programs, it is most often used referring to pre-kindergarten or preschool programs, including all child care centers...There is no common philosophy, theoretical orientation or curriculum for these programs."[6]

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[5] Michigan State Board of Education, "Directions in Early Childhood Education - Age Limits, Purpose, Program Components, and Terminology," (Lansing: State Dept. of Education, Feb., 1976), p.1.

[6] Michigan State Board of Education, "Directions in Early Childhood Education - Age Limits, Purpose, Program Components, and Terminology," (Lansing: State Dept. of Education, Feb., 1976), pp. 4-5.

In this paper physical or psychomotor program components refer to aspects of the program which meet the child's needs in nutrition, health, and motor development.

Affective program components are those which meet the needs of the child relating to the development of a positive self concept, and socio-emotional skills such as responsibility, independence, communication, concern for others, and a zest for life.

Cognitive program components are those which meet the child's intellectual needs by providing stimulating and developmentally appropriate language, perceptual, motor, memory, and problem solving experiences.

Spontaneous aspects of the cognitive curriculum component are usually dependent on what happens during the day at school and capitalizes on the teachable moments which occur. These aspects are usually direct responses to cues and interests of the children.

Horizontal aspects of the cognitive curriculum component link related experiences together and expand them, increasing and enriching the child's background and adding information for the child to absorb. Units or themes are expanded from the child's interests. Music, language, art and play experiences which are related to the theme are integrated in the curriculum planning.

Vertical aspects of the cognitive part of the curriculum are those which take the horizontal content as the medium for developing and generalizing important intellectual concepts that underlie future experiences and abilities in

thinking skills. Vertical curriculum development uses the themes of horizontal content to give children opportunities to practice thinking skills in the areas of language, motor, perceptual, memory and problem solving.

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is assumed that early childhood education experiences, and, particularly, pre-kindergarten experiences, have a significant influence on the child's attitudes toward life and learning. It is assumed by this researcher that if the child has a rich base of appropriate experiences and the opportunity to interact with this developmentally appropriate learning environment, he or she will develop coping and self concept skills, physical skills, and intellectual skills to his or her best potential.

The curriculum in this study reflects a Piaget orientation. It is felt that the development of the child's intellect is the result of a continual interaction with the environment, representing continuous adaptation. Learning occurs as physical maturation is coupled with first hand experiences. The teacher plans and offers the environment and experiences for the child's natural interaction and response. Piaget emphasizes natural interaction, active participation and spontaneity as a vital part of the preschool curriculum.[7] The curriculum in this study is meant to occur in an open classroom

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[7] Jean Piaget, To Understand Is To Invent: The Future of Education, trans.. George-Anne Roberts (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973), p. 9

setting where learning centers or areas are well defined but flexible, and where there are opportunities in the schedule for adult directed activity and child centered activity, with the largest portion of time in the schedule alloted for child centered activity or play experiences.

It is an assumption of this researcher that teachers in preprimary programs will use many behaviorist techniques and psychodynamicist techniques in interacting with children or implementing the curriculum, depending on their philosophies, but that the most appropriate curriculum planning is that which is Piaget based in its cognitive aspects.

Another limitation of this study, in addition to the researcher's own bias as to theoretical base, is that there be a strong parent involvement component in the curriculum. In some preprimary centers, such as day care programs where both parents are employed in some occupation, the role of parents as a staff as they are in this study might be impossible. Other teachers or aides would have to be hired as staff members. However, many of the parent involvement and parent education ideas contained in this study could still be modified and used in situations where parents could not work in the center on a regular basis. It is felt by this researcher that the more parent-teacher involvement and communication there is, the better the experience and reinforcement for the child.

In closing, it is further assumed that parents and educators want the best quality of program and experiences possible for young children and are anxious to better under-

stand what experiences and expectations are appropriate for young children in relation to what is known about child development. It is assumed that parents or educators reading this study can be creative and flexible enough to use it as a guide and to modify it to fit their own situations and their own philosophies.

Chapter 2

CURRICULUM PLANNING

Because a curriculum is based on goals and the goals are based on values, each teacher must do some reflective and analytical thinking about his or her own values before setting down curriculum goals.

PHILOSOPHY

Differing Perspectives of Philosophy

A possible way to begin defining one's own philosophy would be to look at some of the different ways to view human development and the implications of these views. Different perspectives on human development lead to different study and conclusions and to different implications for education. It is important for early childhood educators to examine or establish their own perspectives in terms of values and then organize curriculum plans accordingly.

An excellent overview of the four basic philosophies of human development can be found in chapter two of a text by McCandless and Evans called Children and Youth: Psychosocial Development.[8] The chapter compares the four points of view of the psychodynamicist, behaviorist, humanist, and cognitivist.

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[8] Boyd R. McCandless and Ellis D. Evans, Children and Youth: Psychosocial Development, (Hinsdale, Illinois: The Dryden Press, 1973), pp. 45-83.

The psychodynamicist is interested in stages of personality development; his thinking is largely influenced by Freudian psychology. His main interest is in the formation of the personality in the years before age eight and the resolution of anxieties and sexual conflicts during the early years. Dynamic psychology has made people more aware of their inner feelings and implications of these feelings for their behavior. It has also reinforced the idea that the formative years are very important.

Teachers in early childhood most often use dynamic psychology techniques in guidance and interaction with young children by redirecting or rechanneling antisocial behavior and having children verbalize a wide range of feelings. Therefore, the influence of this perspective on the early childhood teacher is usually seen in the implementing rather than the planning of a curriculum.

The behaviorist perspective has had much influence on American education, particularly compensatory education. The behaviorists believe that all behavior, including the learning process, is caused by the stimuli of the environment. They feel that if the learning environment and stimuli can be studied, controlled, and improved, the learning process of the individual can be improved.

An important tool in changing behavior and improving learning used by the behaviorist is the principle that a specific response followed by a specific reinforcing stimulus is strengthened and more likely to occur again under similar conditions. This technique is called response-dependent

reinforcement and is commonly called behavior modification.[9]

The early childhood teacher is most likely to use behavior modification techniques in implementing a program and in interaction with the children rather than in planning a curriculum. The teacher's reinforcement is often general, rather than specific, creating a positive group climate and reinforcing children for being themselves.

Behavior modification techniques are also used to reinforce specific child behaviors that are valued by the teacher as they occur. This technique would be considered response-independent reinforcement if it occurred in an unplanned manner and response-dependent if it were a specifically planned stimulus and response.

The behaviorist perspective does have important implications for some aspects of early childhood planning. Pre-primary teachers should constantly keep in mind the influence of the setting and environment on children's behavior. Close attention must be given to daily schedules, room arrangements, and use of space and equipment.

The cognitive developmentalists, such as Piaget, view human development as a progression from one stage to another. They are concerned with the human being's rational and problem solving processes, as well as their social and moral development. The cognitivist believes that the human being will pass through the developmental stages no matter what his exper-

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[9] Boyd R. McCandless and Ellis D. Evans, Children and Youth: Psychosocial Development, (Hinsdale, Illinois: The Dryden Press, 1973), p. 61.

iences and environment, but that the quality of the experiences will affect the individual's capacities and his foundation or preparation for the next sequences in development.

In Piaget's theory of the sequence of intellectual development, the preprimary child for which this curriculum study is written would be involved in the period of preoperational thought.[10] It is very important at this stage that the child is actively involved in interactions with the environment in his natural preparation for the next stage of concrete operations at around the age of seven.

Piaget has had much influence on curriculum planning in early childhood education. The majority of preprimary programs with cognitive components in the curriculum reflect a Piaget orientation.

The humanist is a believer in the best in man and has an unconditional regard for the human being. The humanist builds on human strengths and believes individuals are basically self-determining and self-actualizing persons who are continually in the process of becoming, and who are active in shaping their own growth and environments.

Because preprimary teachers are so interested in the being and becoming of the whole child as a person, the influence of humanists such as A. H. Maslow and Carl Rogers has been strongly seen in early childhood programs.

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[10] Boyd R. McCandless and Ellis D. Evans, Children and Youth: Psychosocial Development, (Hinsdale, Illinois: The Dryden Press, 1973), p.68.

Another influence of the humanists is seen in the fact that the majority of preprimary programs have or are forming parent involvement and education components emphasizing the personal growth of the parent as well as the child. In these parent discussion groups there is an emphasis that all persons, whether child or adult, constantly grow, change, and shape their destinies.

Until recent years the humanist philosophy was largely seen in the positive guidance and interaction with children and adults in the implementation of programs. Recent emphasis on setting down affective goals of the curriculum has allowed the humanist perspective to have more influence on the actual curriculum planning of early childhood programs.

Philosophy of This Curriculum Study

Some elements of all the philisophical perspectives on the preceeding pages have influenced the philosophy on which this curriculum study is based. The humanist perspective has had the largest influence on the formation of the affective components and would also be seen in the implementation of the program and interaction with children and adults. The cognitivist, Piagetian perspective has had a primary influence on the cognitive and psychomotor components of the curriculum. Elements of the dynamicist and behaviorist views would be seen as influences in the implementation of the program and the planning of the environment.

The following letter, sent annually to each parent in the program and included in the parent handbook of the center

where this curriculum is used, best illustrates an overview of the philosophy on which the curriculum is based:

Dear Parents,

You who are new to our program may wonder why we have been so involved and so excited about it. You may ask yourselves if it is worth the effort we put into it. Speaking as a former preschool parent, let me ask you to 'hang in there.' As the weeks unfold, you will soon see why we are so enthusiastic.

Of course, the most obvious reason is that we want this type of program, where parents are involved as a staff on an ongoing basis in the education of their children.

In this program, we parents gain more understanding of our own and other children. We help our child take his first step of independence away from the full security of home. We learn to see our child in a new light when we see him in this new environment and in new situations. We see new facets of his personality and we learn to respect him more as an individual, rather than as an extension of us.

Parents learn more about what to expect from their children at different levels of growth. They learn that at nursery children are not 'just playing.' They are working and learning through play. By using the appropriate materials in a planned setting in a carefully planned program, children are free to learn and practice many skills at their own growth rate. Finally, parents learn new methods of handling their children's behavior. In the give and take of working together, we sometimes learn new things about ourselves and our skills, too, and we all grow.

Now, speaking as your resource person and your child's teacher, let me talk about what I hope your child will gain from this program. The most important goal in the program is that the child learn to know and like himself as an individual. His interaction with adults, materials, and other children in the nursery will teach him about his capabilities and his limitations. He will make many choices and solve many problems on his own level. Each experience that is self-directed teaches him more about himself and his work and leads him to growth in self confidence, self discipline, and competency.

There is much pressure on today's children to achieve intellectually, and schools sometimes seem

more interested in preparing children to be pupils rather than people. We must naver forget that there are many parts of a child's mind and personality that need nurturing and growth. We want to help the whole child grow, not just develop his intellectual ability. Authorities in child development and early childhood education believe thst the best way to prepare a child for the future pressures he will have to cope with is not by teaching him to read early, but by helping him develop inner strength and self reliance. A good self image is the best foundation for a happy and successful life.

Keeping in mind that the preschool is a supplement to the home in providing enriching experiences which develop the whole child, the goals of this program might be summarized as follows:

1. School is another place besides home where the child can feel secure, protected, and important.

2. He learns that generally, adults are fair, loving and optomistic people who care.

3. He learns to know and like himself and feels accepted as a person in his own right.

4. He gains help and guidance in the following areas of development as a supplement to his home life:

Creative growth - free expression of self as an individual in many acceptable ways and media

Intellectual growth - stimulation and encouragement of curiosity about our world - more understanding of the world and its relationships - practice in language, motor, memory, perceptual, and problem solving skills

Physical growth - learning to control and care for his growing body

Social growth - learning to accept and relate positively to adults and peers - learning to form friendships - learning to contribute to a group and accept the modifications that the group requires - learning concern for others

Emotional growth - learning to accept his own capabilities and limitations and like himself - learning to feel confident in dealing with new situations, materials and routines - learning to cope with strong feelings and express them in acceptable ways - learning to verbalize and solve problems - learning to plan the use of his time and acquire independence in play

These goals will be accomplished largely through the media of children's play experiences. To a child, play is the work of each day. Planning the play, a related work skill, is a preparation for the planning and decision making of later life. Planning skills and work skills are still skills which need to be learned. The child learns them in the preschool by dealing with materials and the environment in an activity that adults call 'play.' Problem solving and decision making are other important skills that the child practices each day through the experience of play.

These play experiences are planned by the teacher or resource person so that there will be a balance of appropriate alternatives and materials for children to deal with each day. There is always freedom of choice within the limits and guidelines that the adult sets up in the learning environment. The freedom which seems apparent to the child or a casual observer in an open classroom setting is actually the result of highly structured planning by the teacher. The more the freedom of choices for the child, the more the structure and planning required by the teacher.

A child takes many steps in the preschool. He learns to plan and think, to try new things, to experiment and have an open mind, to complete tasks and solve problems on his own level. He learns to control his body and emotions, to give and take, and to develop many intellectual skills.

You know that all these things will not be learned at once. It will take weeks or months for your child to progress in some areas, while in others he will progress quickly. As these changes in your child gradually unfold, you will be convinced that nursery school is <u>not</u> at all a prep school for kindergarten, but a foundation for life. Preschool is meant to <u>give</u> children their fullest, richest year, not rob them of it by spending the whole time getting ready to be five.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Petersen[11]

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[11] Evelyn Petersen, Letter written and sent to all new parents in the preschool program each year and included in the parent handbook as a statement of philosophy for the program of the Traverse City Cooperative Nursery School, Traverse City, Michigan. Letter written in 1973 and revised in 1974.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

It is most important to know as much as possible about the developmental characteristics of a four year old before planning a program for this age level. The teacher must remember, however, that the preschool group may have a chronological range from age three to age five. In addition, four year olds will probably exhibit four year old behavior in some areas and three or five year old behaviors in others. Each child will be simultaneously progressing at different rates in the affective, cognitive and physical realms. Also, within the individual, development in each realm may be progressing along different rates. Finally, all the children will come to the group with different learning styles and with differing backgrounds and experiences.

In spite of the above differences or limitations, the teacher needs to know what behaviors have been observed and summarized as being the most common behaviors likely to occur in the child's fourth year.

> There's not a chance in the world that you can overlook a four year old in your center! He's the busiest, noisiest, most active child anywhere. He talks the most and sings the loudest. He is ready for group companionship and ready to use those big muscles for running, jumping, climbing and pushing. Sometimes he is very hard to understand - one minute he is the blustering, self-confident man of the world and the next minute he is crushed and dejected because someone forgot to praise him or ignored him. He is exuberant, enthusiastic, and sometimes quite exasperating.[12]

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[12] State of Maryland Department of Health Newsletter, (Baltimore: September, 1965), p. 1.

In the area of social growth the four year old enjoys children and friends and engages often in associative and cooperative play. He can share, but is often a tease or acts bossy. He is an eager group member, but often plans to play alone some of the time. He is beginning to understand the limitations of working in a group, and is beginning to develop empathy. He is very interested in adults as resource persons and in adult roles.

In the emotional realm, the four year old wants more independence than he can handle. He often tests limits set by adults. His dramatic play involves people and places outside the home. Conscience and inner control now begin to develop. Sometimes he develops new fears that seem quite irrational to an adult. His sense of initiative is developing and he is interested in competence and is very proud of his accomplishments in any area. His drive is to be capable as well as loveable, and to learn as much as possible about everything.

In the area of physical growth, his art has purpose, and he draws what is important to him, even if an adult may not know what it is. He can hold tools and crayons correctly. He dresses and undresses with ease and can start a zipper if he is shown how. He can use scissors if he doesn't have to stay on a line. Toileting accidents are very rare; and he can talk and eat now, at the same time. He likes to throw and catch and loves stunts and tricks with his body. He likes to work on balance and is very active. Often he overtires because of his high activity level and not knowing how to slow down. When he overtires, he is apt to either become silly or crabby.

Intellectual characteristics of this age are complex sentences and many questions. He does not understand fully the difference between reality and fantasy. He is now conscious of sex and sex role differences. He remembers past events, understands yesterday and today, and events in the near future. His vocabulary is much bigger than his understanding of it, which often leads adults to expect more of him than he can do. He loves to experiment, to observe and to guess what will happen. He enjoys problem solving.

The teacher may find the four year old more difficult to plan for than the calmer, more cooperative, dependent, and anxious-to-please three year old. This is because fours are undergoing a growth spurt and a transition period of development that is accompanied by some frustrations, over-reactions, and high activity levels. The five year old emerges as a more skilled, poised, controlled, and cooperative individual. However, the teaching challenge of being a part of this period of growth and change is truly rewarding, at least to this writer.

This researcher strongly suggests that the curriculum planner in early childhood own and study several books on child development. The three most highly recommended in this study are the McCandless text mentioned earlier in the study, A. Gesell's The First Five Years of Life: A Guide to the Study of the Preschool Child, and David Elkind's A Sympathetic Understanding of the Child: Birth to Sixteen. Another book that is helpful but not as detailed is How To Parent, by Fitzhugh Dodson.

PHYSICAL COMPONENTS OF THE CURRICULUM

The preschool environment and equipment, as well as the daily schedule of activities are the most important factors of the physical components of the curriculum. The equipment and environment are so intertwined with the accomplishment of activities promoting physical and psychomotor growth that more time is spent here in discussion of equipment than in other parts of the study.

Appropriate experiences which promote psychomotor development can be described as those which involve the use of large movements and muscles of the body and those which involve eye-hand coordination. Suggestions for psychomotor activities can be summarized in the following list:

1. Locomotive activities such as creeping, crawling, walking, stopping, climbing, side-steping, rolling, running, galloping, and creative rhythmic movement.

2. Other balance related activities such as balancing on one foot, hopping, jumping, jumping off of and over objects, movement in space.

3. Visual motor activities such as using woodworking tools; rolling, throwing or catching objects; following a line with eyes or body.

4. Describing and acting out directions of movement and positions of objects in relation to eachother and in space, rearranging objects in space, fitting together and taking apart objects.

5. Finer visual motor activities such as stringing, tearing, cutting, tracing, copying, sewing, tying, using hands with media such as clay, using art media.

6. playing in and acting on an environment which promotes health and safety.

A primary concern of the physical components is for the health and safety of the children. These health and safety

conditions are largely regulated by the Department of Social Services who licenses the center in cooperation with the fire and health departments in the community.

Good health and safety for children are provided by adequate heating conditions, freedom from drafts, ease in cleaning the environment, and absence of hazards in indoor and outdoor areas of the setting. Carpeting some areas reduces draft and hazard and significantly lowers the noise level. Carpeting the large muscle and block areas, the book or quiet corner, and the fine motor area is recommended.

Nutrition is a concern if food is served. In the center where this curriculum study is used, snacks are served daily. These are sent by parents on a rotating basis or are made at school by the children. Child prepared snacks that can easily be done as part of the curriculum include cheeses, raw vegetables and fruits, various breads, muffins, pizza, and chicken or beef vegetable soups. Parents in this center receive a list of nutritional snack ideas compiled from resources such as the Michigan Dairy Council and the County Cooperative Extension Office, and sweets are discouraged except on birthdays and holidays.

More important to the curriculum planner is the use of space and equipment to promote physical growth and coordination. The setting be planned so that if offers the maximum in flexibility. Moveable partitions and low, open shelves for materials encourage independence and initiative in children, facilitate flexibility, and also allow easy observation of the children by the adults.

Minimum space requirements are also included in the Department of Social Services regulations for centers. If at all possible the space in the center should include 1800 to 2000 square feet. At a minimum, about one third of this space should be alloted for the large muscle area and blocks.

The children can best learn to develop coordination and control of their growing bodies if they have the space in which to use these bodies and muscles. The same space used for the large muscle and block play is also used for whole-group, adult-directed activities such as music, movement, literature, and planning with children. Therefore, as much space as possible is needed for the multiple uses of this area. Woodworking equipment is usually found in this area, and quite often dramatic play is set up or flows into this area.

One piece of equipment in this area which fosters psychomotor growth is a sturdy balance beam which can be used in either two or four inch capacity, and which can be raised, lowered, tilted, placed on the floor, or used as part of an obstacle course for children to negotiate.[13]

Other items needed are a mat or donated mattress for tumbling, a climber, a variable play triangle set, a wooden bridge and rocking boat combination which can also be used as a counter in dramatic play, and easy to handle, large hollow blocks. It is wise to also include another balance beam made of a plank and two small wooden horses which can be used

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[13] See appendix p.71 for sequence of growth in following a line in which balance beam activity is included. Balance beam activity is very important, especially for children with possible perceptual motor problems.

in many ways. With the additions of heavy rope, large balls, bicycle tubes or tires, and carpet squares, countless varieties of play and obstacle courses can be devised and used.

Unit blocks are a vital equipment need. There should be enough blocks and space for five or more children to play at a time, they should be accessibly stored, and accessories to use in block play should be available. An excellent resource book for early childhood educators is the National Association for the Education of Young Children text, The Block Book.[14]

This book thoroughly explains the values of block play to all aspects of the curriculum, including socio-emotional and creative values, as well as values in science and mathematics. The book also gives valuable guidelines for the adult in facilitating block play for the children's development in learning and suggestions for buying and storing blocks.

Block play provides many of the psychomotor experiences listed at the beginning of this chapter section. It is this writer's opinion, as it is that of many other early childhood educators, that block play is one of the most valuable sensorimotor play experiences leading to the development of operational thought.

Water and sand play are also a basic media for providing manipulatory and eye-hand coordination experiences that lead naturally to psychomotor development. Water and sand play, as well as woodworking, should always be included in plans for curriculum and for equipping a center for this age level.

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[14] Elizabeth S. Hirsch, ed., The Block Book, (Washington: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1973).

The remaining space in the preprimary environment is most often divided between the art media area and the small muscle area, where materials must be provided for other eye-hand coordination experiences such as listed in the first page of this chapter section. Manipulative and perceptual experiences occur frequently in both of these areas.

The space described above is further subdivided into further learning centers such as a combination cooking and snack area, a quiet corner or book nook, a science center, a water and sand play area, a housekeeping or doll corner area, and a dramatic play area. The storage of dramatic play props and costumes is best placed near both the housekeeping and the large muscle areas, since the dramatic play and role play will most likely be occurring there.

Some indoor areas are very moveable and flexible. For example, water play equipment, which is basic to the preschool setting, can be placed in the housekeeping area, the art area, or in the snack and cooking area. Woodworking equipment is also often moved to the art area rather than kept always in the large muscle area, because children often paint what they create with woodworking materials.

Each center should have an outdoor area with clear limits or boundaries for children to understand. For good physical growth, children should spend at least a short time outside each day that the weather permits. Play equipment in the outdoor area is essentially simple and large muscle in orientation. Much of it can be made or donated, or found at little or no cost. The outdoor equipment at the center where

this curriculum study was implemented included tire swings instead of metal or wooden swings, which are dangerous in a preprimary setting. It also included a large, cement drain-pipe tunnel, a dome climber, a home-made wooden an rope climber, a discarded tire climber, a tire obstacle course, a sand box and a digging area, and a grassy, man-made hill.

In addition, much indoor equipment can easily be taken outdoors if desired. Balance beams, mats, trucks, sand and water equipment, and even art materials can be moved outside to enhance outdoor play. In the center described, the four year olds also sometimes used a kite, a parachute, balls, a bat, and rope outdoors. The use of outdoor equipment such as described above enhances physical growth and coordination.

The flexibility of equipment in the center is very important to the curriculum planner or teacher, who wants to encourage the free, spontaneous flow of children among all of the learning centers during the free choice or free play time, but is concerned that there be a balance of numbers in these areas. The four year old program in which this curriculum was developed served twenty four year olds. It is more comfortable for the staff and children if an area in the setting is not overcrowded. It also reduces likelihood of accidents or discipline problems when an area is not overcrowded, thus promoting safety and well being of children.

Because the equipment in the setting is flexible, some of the high interest or stimulating equipment can be used to draw children into new learning centers of the environment if there is overcrowding in any one area. Some of

the high interest materials for four year olds are cooking experiences, new art activities, science experiments, animals to observe, woodworking, and water play. The large muscle equipment is also of very high interest, but usually cannot be moved about the room as easily as all the other materials mentioned.

If there is a balance of stimulating or high interest material in all areas of the room, and this balance is varied with the lesson plans, children will flow and work among all the learning centers, learning to plan their time independently, without the need for artificial, adult-contrived control devices. The environment is the key. The teacher must simply plan the curriculum for the setting so that the environment will modify or control the behavior of the children.[15] In this way, and with supplementary, whole-group, adult-directed activities, the teacher can be sure that children are getting all the experiences that promote physical and psychomotor, as well as affective and cognitive growth.

Another aspect of the program which affects physical growth of children is the daily schedule. There should be a balance of quiet and active experiences and also a balance of time for both quiet and active experiences in the schedule. Four year olds have such a high activity level that if restful activities were not planned by adults, the fours might not slow down at all, and would become overtired. The time blocs

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[15] See appendix p.83 for the sample of a daily lesson plan. This plan shows a balance of high interest activity in all the areas of the setting. A balance of quiet activity in each area is also included.

of active and restful activity should be alternated throughout the preschool day. In the sample of a daily schedule in the appendix the reader will find a guide for the time spent in these activities in a half-day program.[16] It is evident from examination of daily lesson plan and the daily schedule in the appendix that, even in the time bloc for active play, quiet activities are always among the alternatives from which the children may choose. A formal rest time is not considered necessary in a half-day program for four year olds if the balance of quiet and active time is adequate.

It is the feeling of this researcher that it is not enough for a preprimary teacher or curriculum planner to know a list of appropriate experiences and equipment which will foster psychomotor development. The planner must also be able to set up the experiences with the equipment in a planned sequence throughout the year, progressing from easier to more difficult experiences. Careful ongoing observation of the children and a knowledge of child development will tell the teacher or planner what kinds of experiences can be handled at different times and what should follow.

A sequence of activities for psychomotor development to be used throughout the year has been developed by this researcher for this age level and can be found in the appendix of this study.[17]

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[16] See appendix p.85 for sample of a daily schedule used in a half-day program for four year olds.

[17] See appendix p.76 for Practice in Intellectual Skills, sequence for Motor activities. Section includes seven pages.

Other guides for sequencing that are helpful to the curriculum planner or teacher are developmental inventories which can be purchased, such as the Santa Clara Inventory of Developmental Tasks.[18] A copy of the profile sheet from this inventory has been included in the appendix.[19] It is important, however, for the planner to check such purchased inventories against resource books in child development by authorities in the field to make sure that sequences sometimes given in such inventories are accurate.

The planner can also get this information from consultation with resource persons from the Intermediate School District office, such as a perceptual-motor specialist or a physical therapist. Another help to the planner in sequencing is to observe the sequence of skills and the breakdown of skill learning that is done in Montessori centers, or to read some of Maria Montessori's own books.[20]

It is the feeling of this writer that the environment and equipment, as well as the daily schedule, also affect the affective and cognitive components of curriculum planning, but probably not to the extent that they affect the physical components of planning.

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[18] Gainer, William L., ed., The Santa Clara Inventory of Developmental Tasks, (Santa Clara, California: Richard L. Zweig Associates and the Santa Clara Unified School District), 1974.

[19] See appendix p. 91 for Santa Clara Inventory profile sheet.

[20] Maria Montessori, Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook, (New York: Stokes, 1914).

AFFECTIVE COMPONENTS OF PLANNING

The list of social and emotional goals for the preprimary program listed in the philosophy section of this chapter summarize the affective goals of this curriculum.[21] For more specific detail on the socio-emotional skills which can be expected to emerge in this program, the reader is referred to the affective checklist developed by this researcher and included in the appendix of this study.[22] These skills can be considered consistent with what is known about expectations for this age level from the study of child development.

It is important to remember that the development of these skills in a program for young children is affected by the modeling and interactions of adults in the program. Moreover, these affective skills continue to develop in individuals throughout life, and each person's potential capacities in the socio-emotional realms are different, just as they differ in the physical realms.

In the child's early years, however, the seeds for affective growth are sown; they are nurtured by the experiences offered in the preprimary program and by the interactions, attitudes and modeling of peers and adults in the child's life.

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[21] See Chapter 2., p. 17 for list of social and emotional goals.

[22] See appendix p.88 for social and emotional growth checklist. List includes three pages.

The most important task for the preprimary curriculum planner in meeting affective goals of the program in the emotional area is to allow as much opportunity as possible for self-directed activities by the children. By having maximum opportunities for choice and decision making among the alternatives set up by the planner, the child will have the chance to develop the following skills in the emotional realm:

1. Self-confidence
2. Autonomy and independence
3. Initiative and responsibility for behavior
4. Inner control and self discipline
5. Planning use of time
6. Industry and deep involvement in forms of play
7. Verbalization of problems and problem solving
8. Persistence in a chosen task
9. Experimentation and divergent thought
10. Creative expression

It is recommended by this writer that four year olds in a preprimary program need, at the very least, one full hour of free choice or free play time among well-planned alternatives in order for these skills to develop. The daily schedule previously referred to in the preceeding section and which is included in the appendix allows approximately one hour and ten minutes for free choice time.

It has been observed by this researcher that many children often spend twenty minutes or more simply observing other children or what is offered before getting involved in any play activity during the first months of the year. These same children are usually those who have fewer skills than others in self-confidence, independence, initiative, and other self-direction skills. Since it is necessary to meet the needs of these children, the length of time for self-direction in the

curriculum plan is doubly important. Also important is the support and reinforcement of adults when the child becomes more comfortable in the situation and has the confidence to risk becoming involved with peers and activities.

Maximum time for free play also enhances the sequential development of more complex play behaviors. The commonly observed sequences of the development of play are solitary play, onlooker behavior, parallel play, associative play, and cooperative play.

The skills in the social realm that develop naturally by providing a variety of play experiences as well as the time for children to become involved in them are summarized in the following list:

1. Cause and effect relationships in social situations
2. Respect for the ideas and resources of others
3. Communication and interaction skills
4. Identity with the group
5. Awareness of reasons for limits in the group or environment
6. Development of empathy
7. Ability to take turns and develop tolerance
8. Ability to form friendships and to trust
9. Ability to cope with change

Some children would rather play with objects, art materials, and equipment which can be controlled than with other children. Sometimes this is due to the fact that they are unwilling to be involved with others, especially the first months of the program, because playing with others is not as easy to control as is playing alone with objects. Events in play with others are unpredictable; there are constant changes in the play situation, as well as new people and ideas with which to cope.

Yet, dealing with others is a skill all human beings need to develop. Helping children cope with changes in a play situation is one way to foster this skill. Again, play experiences need to be offered over a maximum length of time in order for skills to develop.

Self concept can be nurtured by the teacher or adults in the program by supportive interactions with the children and positive reinforcement of their accomplishments in all areas of growth. Self concept is also nurtured by descriptive praise for whatever the child creates. An excellent discussion of descriptive praise can be found in the Haim Ginott book, Teacher and Child, and also in the Wesley Becker book, Parents Are Teachers.[23]

The curriculum planner of a preprimary program for fours must plan daily for alternative opportunities for creative expression. The sample of a daily lesson plan in the appendix shows a choice of several alternatives for creative self-expression in the art area, as well as provision for dramatic play in the large muscle area.[24]

In order to nurture self concept and creativity, daily opportunities for the free experimentation of art media, as well as daily opportunities for self-expression in conversation and in dramatic play should be planned. The planner

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[23] Wesley C. Becker, Parents Are Teachers (Champaign, Illinois: Research Press, 1971), pp. 101-111; see also Haim Ginott, Teacher and Child (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), pp. 125-143.

[24] See appendix p.83 for the sample of a daily lesson plan.

should keep in mind the balance of high interest activities in the setting, which will control the flow of the group to all areas of the room. Again, a full hour of free choice time in the schedule will allow children to experiment, express, and create.

The following guidelines for fostering creativity will help the curriculum planner in planning activities, interactions, and inservice training for staff for the development of creative growth in children:

1. Remember that creativity is learned by modeling. You try new things, too, and let them know when you do.
2. Keep confronting children with new experiences on their own developmental levels. Let them know it is alright to make a mistake.
3. Be creative as a leader. Show that you are interested in turning disadvantages into advantages. Let them know that you make mistakes sometimes, too.
4. There are many sides to a question and many "right" answers. Be sure you get more than one solution whenever possible. Avoid making models with art media!
5. Allow children to choose their activities from those you have set up so they will have experiences in decision making.
6. Allow children to solve problems on their own level, make mistakes, and accept responsibility for their own behavior so they will learn from these experiences.
7. Do more listening! Learn to wait for more response from the child instead of telling him what to say. Ask only open-ended questions.
8. Stimulate children to ask questions, to experiment, and to explore by the nature of the materials and experiences you plan and set up.
9. Promote by your attitude a relaxed and warm atmosphere of acceptance.

Growth in self concept can also be nurtured when the adult shows the children that their ideas are valued. One way this can be done is by planning times where children can evaluate the day's activities and take part in planning for new ones.

The adult can still control the curriculum by offering a choice of two or three alternatives and then justifying the trust of the children by following through on their suggestion or decision. This writer suggests that the above technique is best used in the second half of the year with four year olds and that it be worked into, gradually, as the children develop group planning and interaction skills.

Valuing the ideas of children should also be done throughout each day by actively listening to children in their spontaneous conversation. The teacher or planner should also be able to spontaneously respond at times to the ideas or the suggestions of children by acting on these ideas and adding them to the day's lesson plan. If a teacher has a strong and complete lesson plan to fall back on or return to, it is usually much easier to reach out and be spontaneous when a teachable moment occurs.

Another advantage in this kind of situation is that the teacher is modeling flexibility and spontaneity. He or she is showing children that trying something a new way or accepting change is valued. This is also demonstrated when the equipment or activities in the room are changed or when the routine is occasionally modified.

Self concept is also fostered by horizontally planned units dealing with the theme of self, or, "Me, The Most Important Person." Horizontally planned self concept activities can be integrated in all learning centers of the setting and throughout the activities of the day, in both free play time and in adult-directed time.

There are countless art ideas, songs, records, finger plays, stories, pictures, flannel materials, dramatic play ideas, and creative body movement ideas for the teacher to draw on in developing this theme. Since most four year olds are developmentally nearer to age three than age five when the program starts, it is particularly appropriate to use this theme during the first months of the preprimary year, though the thread of the self concept theme should reappear throughout the year.

Ideas for themes or units that are appropriate to horizontal planning for a preprimary program for four year olds are included in the appendix of this study.[25] These have been developed and used by this writer as long range plans for the year within which to plan more specifically.

In summary, social and emotional growth are largely learned through the experiences of the program and through the modeling and attitudes of adults in the program as they set limits, use guidance, and as they interact with the children.

The preprimary teacher and planner should read and internalize resource readings on guidance techniques that are compatible with his or her philosophy. Some of the excellent books that are available are included in the bibliography of this study.

If the planner or teacher has a staff, inservice

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[25] See appendix p.73 for Long Range Plans for the Year. This section includes three pages.

sessions in guidance techniques should be offered so that there can be maximum reinforcement of the valued behaviors in the affective realm for children in the program.

It is the personal opinion of this writer that all preprimary teachers own and internalize the techniques found in the Haim Ginott books, Between Parent and Child and Teacher and Child, as well as the Thomas Gordon book, Parent Effectiveness Training. Another very helpful book which clarifies behavior modification in child management is the book already mentioned in this section in connection with descriptive praise, Parents Are Teachers, by Wesley C. Becker.

COGNITIVE COMPONENTS OF PLANNING

It seems appropriate to begin this section with a pertinent quote taken from a chapter by Harriet M. Johnson from The Block Book:

> Grown-ups are still prone to organize a curriculum for one 'area of learning' and then another, and to work out equipment which they think will develop one patch of a child and then another. But children just refuse to respond in this piecemeal fashion. They remain consistently whole people, reacting to situations with all their lively interests mixed together. They are small scientists eagerly investigating the world they can get their hands on; small human beings interested in other human beings; dramatists playing out their experiences...workmen exulting in their techniques; artists enjoying design and pattern...balance in size and color, repetition.[26]

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[26] Harriet M. Johnson, "The Art of Block Building," The Block Book, ed. Elizabeth S. Hirsch (Washington: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1973), p. 9.

Key Experiences

Cognitive experiences for children are many and varied and can be more easily clarified for discussion and planning if divided into five groups. The five groups of key cognitive experiences which should be offered in a preprimary program are as follows:

1. Motor activities
2. Perceptual activities
3. Language activities
4. Memory activities
5. Problem solving activities

First it should be noted that coordination skills such as large motor, eye-hand, and visual motor skills have already been discussed in the physical components section of this chapter. They are highly related to the other cognitive skills and are often grouped with them as 'cognitive and psychomotor' skills in lists of objectives and in developmental inventories.

This is true of the Santa Clara Inventory of Developmental Tasks referred to in the physical components section. The Santa Clara Inventory profile sheet found in the appendix suggests certain motor and visual motor skills for observation. It also lists auditory and visual perception skills, language skills, auditory and visual memory skills, and conceptual or problem solving skills. It is easy to see the relationship between this inventory and the five groups of key cognitive experiences listed above.

Since motor skills have been discussed in the physical components section of this chapter, little time will be spent discussing them here. However, it is important for early childhood educators and administrators to understand that

these psychomotor skills are, in a very real sense, intellectual skills.

They form the physical foundation from which other roots of intelligence grow. They are the foundation for skills in reading, writing and design; they are highly related to science and mathematics because they deal so strongly in spatial and temporal relationships and in physical knowledge. Psychomotor experiences are very important.

Additionally, the psychomotor experiences suggested in the previous section of this chapter promote the cognitive skill of representation. Role playing, dramatic play, block play, construction with art materials or sand and clays, drawings, paintings, and collages all are forms of representation in thought.

Perceptual experiences, particularly in tactile sensory perception, have a very high interest to the young child. Adults learning mainly through vision and hearing often forget how much children learn through their senses of smell, taste, and touch. Planned perceptual experiences should include many auditory, tactile, and visual experiences in discrimination, as well as some activities in smelling and tasting. These experiences should progress in a sequence from gross to fine discrimination experiences throughout the year. The adult should keep in mind that children like to repeat what they enjoy. One does not need to rush on to the next level of difficulty in discrimination; young children enjoy perceptual sensory experiences.

Language experiences include listening and speaking

conversation; describing; expressing feelings verbally; telling about oneself; listening to poetry, stories, or records; making up stories and poems, role play or dramatic play dialogue, and having an adult write down one's creative expression in words. In implementing a program for young children adults must be aware of and learn to control their tendency to do too much talking and not enough listening.

Memory experiences, like all the cognitive experiences, are constantly going on in the world of the young child. The curriculum planner should know the kinds of memory skills that are going on in this natural manner and consider them a part of the sequence of development in memory skills. Then the planner or teacher should add both visual and auditory memory planned experiences to the daily lesson plans. These should gradually progress during the year to more difficult auditory and visual memory experiences, but should not go beyond what the child can do developmentally. Frustration does not lead to learning.

Problem solving skills are many and varied. Representation is one which has already been mentioned because it is also often a motor skill. Problem solving experiences are those which classify objects in the environment and which compare and order these objects. Ordering can also be thought of as seriation. Experiences in number concepts are related to ordering and seriation. Matching objects one to one and counting or grouping objects are all related to number concepts and are problem solving experiences.

The curriculum should offer many hands on experiences

with clays, water, sand, and other objects for the child to begin to have a foundation of knowledge which will help him later to understand mass, weight, and volume, and to be able to conserve.[27]

Many experiences should be planned in sorting, grouping, exploring and talking about the properties of objects, and comparing the likenesses and differences of objects.

Finally, the curriculum planner should include as many simple experiments on the child's level as possible in lesson plans. The child learns from experimenting to observe, to make guesses about what might happen, to try out his guesses, to see the effects of his idea or exploring action, and to make generalizations. Four year olds love experiments and take naturally to the scientific method.

The curriculum planner, knowing and understanding the five groups of key experiences to offer, must now plan ways to offer a balance of all of these experiences throughout the year's program in a progression of simple to more complex activities.

Spontaneous Aspects

Spontaneous aspects of planning have already been mentioned in the affective components section of this chapter. The teacher in a preprimary program, if observant, will find many ways to use teachable moments nearly every day to introduce new cognitive skills or to reinforce those which the

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[27] According to Piaget's theory, children do not fully understand mass, weight, and volume, or to conserve, until about the age of seven, in the stage of concrete operational thought.

children have already discovered or practiced.

There are countless opportunities for experimenting, for trying cause and effect situations, and for comparing likenesses and differences in the multi-media situation of a preschool setting. These spontaneous opportunities are most likely to occur in situations where children are observing plants and animals, using unit blocks, using sand and water, exploring with art media, and in doing any kind of cooking or food preparation. Obviously, then, spontaneous aspects of the cognitive components of curriculum planning occur more often during free play than in adult-directed time. This is another reason for a free play time to be as long as possible.

Horizontal Aspects

Horizontal aspects of planning have already been mentioned in connection with self concept in the affective section of this chapter. Again, horizontal planning refers to themes or units built on the children's interests and expanded so that many aspects of the day's activities relate to the theme.

Just as music, art, stories and play can be integrated with a theme, so can cognitive experiences be integrated. For example, if the teacher were using the theme of fall, leaves could be gathered, sorted, compared, ordered, described, matched in several ways, counted or grouped. Motor, perceptual, memory, and language experiences would also all be going on at the same time the above problem solving activities were being done.

Language and memory skills would also be practiced by using songs, stories and poems about fall and leaves, and motor skills would be practiced by including creative movement relating to fall or leaves. Many fall themes can be acted out by dramatic play, either with movement only, or with dialogue included.

Creative movement would not only foster self expression, but would develop representation, motor, and spatial relationship skills. These same benefits would also occur in exploration with the art media. There are many ways to combine fall themes with art.

Experiments could also be done with leaves, acorns, or other fall media. Observation walks could be taken where the signs of fall would be noted, nature materials gathered, and discussions begun. Language and memory skills would be further practiced when such a walk would be discussed later. Sorting out fall gatherings and acorns and leaves would be further perceptual discrimination practice.

Long range horizontal curriculum planning for the year gives a teacher or planner time to gather or develop enriching ideas for each theme or unit. It gives the teacher time to plan ahead for theme-related visitors or field trips, and to gather or obtain any special materials needed. The more planning ahead that is done, the more ways the planner can find to integrate the cognitive experiences into the lesson plan in ways that are interesting and fun for children.

The sample of long range planning for the year that was mentioned in the preceeding section of this chapter and

which is included in the appendix gives the teacher or planner many ideas for this kind of horizontal planning and enrichment of the preprimary curriculum.

Vertical Aspects

It is the feeling of this researcher that most preprimary teachers have trouble with two basic problems in the vertical planning of cognitive experiences. Assuming that they understand what experiences should be offered and how to integrate them in preprimary activities, they still have the problems of balance and sequence.

Sequencing these experiences from easier to more complex in terms of what the child can do developmentally requires that the teacher understand the child development expectations of the children in the program and also be committed to an ongoing use of observation skills.

This researcher has dealt with the sequencing problem of vertical planning by developing a sequence of simple to more complex activities for each of the five groups of key cognitive experiences. This sequence is spread throughout the year by division into four or five week blocs of time in the year's program. The motor skill sequence of activities has already been mentioned in the earlier section on physical components of planning. This long range format for vertical planning for practice in intellectual skills can be found in the appendix.[28] This kind of vertical planning helps the

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[28] See appendix p.76 for Practice in Intellectual Skills. Section includes seven pages.

teacher or planner to better organize the cognitive experiences and to keep a balance of each of the five kinds of experiences integrated in the total curriculum.

There is no point in having children practice intellectual skills that are too difficult by including them in plans at the wrong time of the year for the group or for individuals. It leads to frustration and deterioration of the affective components of the program for the children.

Dangers of this type of problem due to inadequate preplanning can be much lessened by using the long range vertical format and also by developing an ongoing observation plan. By observing children regularly, the teacher can adjust and modify the long range vertical plan to suit the group or individuals within the group. A further discussion of observation and evaluation is dealt with in the following chapter.

The problem of balance in vertical planning of cognitive experiences is also lessened by the long range format. However, there is another practical problem in balance that enters into the picture for the teacher.

The curriculum in this study has been used in a preprimary session of approximately two hours and fifteen minutes. The children met three times a week.

Therefore, unless the daily schedule makes some allowance for small-group, adult-directed activity, where children practice intellectual skills for a short period of time, it is nearly impossible for the curriculum planner to be sure that each child has had opportunities to practice skills in each of the five groups of key experiences. By scheduling

a small-group time or "game time", the planner can be sure that each child has had this opportunity and also keep track of the balance of each of the five kinds of experiences, to be sure that all of them are practiced somewhat equally.

The reader can see, by referring again to the sample of a daily schedule in the appendix, that a period for small-group time is scheduled. It is not scheduled at the expense of the important amount of time needed for free play or free choice time. This researcher feels strongly that free play cannot be cut because of its strong relationship to all of the curriculum components.

A practical consideration for the teacher, then, is how to fit everything into the day of half-day in order to do justice to all three basic components of the curriculum, physical, affective, and cognitive. The values of the planner will be the primary influence on the decision of what to eliminate or cut down if the session is short.

Small-group time is also felt to be necessary to this curriculum, not only for the important opportunity to practice the intellectual skills, but for its placement as a restful time following an active time. It is also important for the adults' need to observe and converse with children in an adult-directed, but child-oriented group situation.

The small group situation also helps children to feel free to participate and develop language skills that they would not likely develop in a whole-group, adult-directed situation.

All four year old children probably need the exper-

ience of a group situation in which the teacher directs the entire group, but most fours cannot tolerate a whole-group experience with twenty children and one directing adult very well for very long.

To those readers who will argue that the children 'will have to do it someday,' this writer answers that long, whole-group, teacher-directed experiences are not developmentally appropriate for four year olds. As a related example, one would not expect a parachute jumper to jump out of a plane at 30,000 feet the first day out because he is 'going to have to do it someday!' There is appropriate preparation for this big step.

In the preschool program for fours, the small-group, adult-directed experience is a transition and preparation for what will be appropriate later for five year olds. It is also important to remember that, in this transition or preparation activity, the child is still getting an adult-directed experience.

The daily schedule in this curriculum does, however, include approximately twenty minutes of adult-directed, whole-group activity because of the music, movement, literature and planning experiences occurring in that period and because some experience in a large group is indeed important for four year olds.

Having established the rationale for small-group time and for free play of an hour or more, the only alternative for this researcher in terms of values, the curriculum and available time, was to omit a formal snack time from the

schedule and use an open-snack format, as shown in the daily schedule sample. This allowed for the inclusion of the small-group practice of intellectual skills, did not cut down the free play-time, and was much more appropriate developmentally.

It was also more practical in serving snack for twenty individuals, and greatly increased the opportunity for children to be self-directed and responsible in taking care of their needs.

To return then, to the two problems of balance and sequence in vertical planning of the cognitive experiences, the solution of these two problems for teachers is possible. It is possible by having a well-planned daily schedule which allows time in each session for the practice of intellectual skills, and by adequate long-range vertical planning to include this practice in a developmental sequence of cognitive experiences throughout the year.

It is important to note that the activities in the practice of intellectual skills in the plan shown in the appendix do not all occur in small-group time. Some occur in the free play or the teacher-directed, whole-group periods. The important thing to the curriculum planner is that all key experiences in each of the five areas be included in daily planning.

In summary, an early childhood educator has a complex set of practical problems with which to deal in order to create a developmentally appropriate preprimary curriculum reflecting a theoretical philosophy and adquately encompassing physical, affective, and cognitive components.

This researcher has found that the secret is in knowing one's own philosophy and then in carefully pre-planning as many aspects of the curriculum as possible. Once the pre-planning has been done, it is very simple to use the long-range plans for the year in conjunction with the daily schedule and the four week blocs of intellectual skills plans to put together a comprehensive lesson plan each day.

Some excellent references to aid early childhood educators in planning the cognitive components of the curriculum are included in the bibliography of this study. More than one of these must be studied by the planner in order to find the best way to meet the cognitive needs of the preprimary child and still reflect one's values and theoretical base.

The three books probably most helpful to this researcher were Millie Almy's book, Young Children's Thinking; the National Association for the Education of Young Children publication, Play As A Learning Medium, Doris Sponseller, editor; and the text, The Whole Child: New Trends in Early Education, by Joanne Hendrick.

Chapter 3

OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

It is the feeling of this researcher that it is not as necessary to write specific behavioral objectives for the preprimary curriculum as it is to provide appropriate stimuli and environments by careful curriculum planning. There is no stopping a young child from learning! What he learns is a result of what he plays with and what he experiences in the environment.

The preprimary teacher must be an ongoing observer of the children in the program. When an individual or a group has had successful experiences at any level of a cognitive or psychomotor skill, it is then appropriate for the teacher to provide new experiences on the next level of sequential development in that skill.

In view of the above remarks, one can understand the importance of a good observation and evaluation plan to the preprimary teacher or curriculum planner. The reason for

observation and evaluation is not to assess the children. It is to assess the program being offered to the children.

It is a needs assessment. This means simply, "What do the children need and what does the teacher need to do for them, by planning, to meet their needs?"

This observation and needs assessment can be done on an ongoing basis by taking daily ancedotal notes, keeping weekly records summarizing them, by using a developmental inventory as a program evaluation technique for cognitive and psychomotor components, and by using an affective check list as a guideline for evaluating the program's affective components.

In the appendix the reader will find the affective rating scale developed by this researcher and the Santa Clara Inventory of Developmental Tasks Profile sheet. These are used as guides in evaluating curriculum needs in this preprimary program.

In addition, this researcher has developed two other evaluation tools. One is a weekly observation sheet for each child onto which daily ancedotal notes are transferred as a summary and data collection device.[29] These sheets are kept in the child's folder along with samples of his art media and fine motor work and shared with parents on an ongoing, monthly basis.

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[29] See appendix pp.86-87 for sample of Weekly Observation Form used to summarize daily notes.

The other original evaluation tool found in the appendix is a sample of an end-of-the-year Evaluation Form used in the preprimary program to summarize growth in the socio-emotional realms, along with a brief summary of intellectual skill development.[30]

At the end of the school year, at a parent conference, the parent receives the child's folder and all weekly observation summary sheets, two copies of the Santa Clara profile sheet (showing an inventory of the child's psychomotor and cognitive growth), and two copies of the end-of-year evaluation form (summarizing the child's growth in the affective realm). It is suggested to parents that they pass on the extra copies to the child's next teacher, if they wish, in order to give that teacher as much information about the child as possible.

In the preprimary program in which the curriculum in this study is used, the teacher is fortunate to have a staff ratio of one adult to each five children. This staff is comprised of parents of the children in the program, as this is a co-operative nursery school. There are also occasional teenage aides in the program, in cooperation with the Probate Court or the Intermediate School District Office.

The parent staff helps during free play by interaction and involvement with children in the three basic areas of the

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[30] See appendix p.92 for sample of Evaluation Form used at the end of the year.

setting, by facilitating play, by observing, and by taking notes. This leaves the teacher free to float and to help with individual learning needs, to observe and to take ancedotal notes, and to model guidance and interaction techniques for children and staff.

The parent staff also takes part in "game time," or small group practice of intellectual skills. Each adult including the teacher takes a group of four or five children, usually at random. The same game is played by all four groups and is planned in accordance with curriculum needs as determined by the teacher or planner. The teacher attempts to have each child in the program in her game time group at least once each three weeks, but also is sure to take into her group any children who need individual help in any area of growth.

The staff, including both teacher and parents, takes observation notes during game time. All of the daily notes are collected, and at the end of the week, one staff member transfers the notes to the weekly observation form. Another feature of the weekly observation summary form is that the kinds of cognitive skills practiced are noted under the five key experience areas. In this way, both parents and teacher know what skills were practiced and if there has been a balance of these activities. This is a further aid in curriculum planning for daily lesson plans.

In addition, the staff is trained by the teacher to

help in using the Santa Clara developmental inventory as a needs assessment in the beginning, middle, and end of the year. This same practice is followed by the parent-staff and teacher with the affective rating scale for socio-emotional growth after thorough in-service training has been done.

It is important to note that observation ancedotal notes done by parents are done on an objective level of observation and reporting. These notes simply describe and report the child's activity or behavior. In a daily post-session discussion, the notes taken are shared and discussed with the teacher, who then adds higher level ancedotal notes of interpretation for each child as needed.

Although observation and ancedotal notes are extremely important tools for the curriculum planner, it is also important to guard against observer bias and subjectivity. The value of an observation rests largely in its accuracy in describing behavior. It is important for observers to record the child's behavior with an open and non-judgemental mind.[31]

This is not to say that a parent staff would not be capable of such unbiased observation. However, the danger of inconsistency and bias is great in a co-operative nursery

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31 Edith M. Dowley, "Cues for Observing Children's Behavior," Childhood Education Vol. 30 (November, 1953), pp. 113-117. And

Evangeline Walker, Effective Observation for Educators, U. S. Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED102, February, 1974.

because the staff works on a rotating basis.

In addition, learning processes in which the child is involved would probably not be known in entirety by a rotating parent staff; these learning processes would probably only be seen in relation to long-term development of the child by the teacher in a co-operative setting. This is why it is suggested that the teacher add the more subjective and interpretive comments to the notes. Inservice for parents on objective observation techniques is still advisable.

The plan for observation and evaluation used in this program works because of the ongoing orientation and inservice training done by the teacher with the parent staff in the co-operative nursery schools. This is described in the next chapter.

It would probably be impossible to do this thorough a job of observation unless the teacher or planner had a staff of at least two other aides or teachers. It would still be extremely difficult with a staff of two; therefore, an adult-child ratio of one to five is strongly recommended by this writer for preprimary programs.

This type of observation and evaluation plan, as well as the curriculum plan, could also work well in a university lab school situation, a public school paid-staff situation, or a vocational education child-care training center. It would not be recommended for an understaffed day care or private

nursery center, especially if there might be a high staff-turnover.

In addition to examination of the observation and evaluation plan in this study, it is the recommendation of this writer to early childhood educators that they do some reading in the Benjamin Bloom Handbook on Formative and Summative Evaluation of Student Learning. Then they should develop a plan which best helps them in observation and evaluation for the purpose of curriculum planning and improvement.

Another helpful guide is the "Self Assessment Inventory," developed in the Saginaw, Michigan, preschool program by Reva Ruby, with subsequent field testing and revision by the State of Michigan Department of Education Preprimary Referent Group. This would be available from the State Department of Education Preprimary Specialist, Dr. Shirley Willard, in Lansing. The "Self Assessment Inventory" helps a program planner to assess all aspects of the program.

Chapter 4

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

It is obvious to the reader from the previous chapter that a high level of parent involvement is used in the implementation of this particular curriculum study. However, the roles of parent staff members in this study could be handled in other kinds of preprimary programs in other ways. Additional staff or aides could be hired, or students in child development or early childhood education either at high school or college levels could be used.

Still, volunteer parents of the children in any preprimary program should always be involved in whatever ways possible. This will help foster good communication between parent and teacher for the child's benefit. Also, the child's learning process will be reinforced when parents implement what is being done at the preprimary center in the home.

In this chapter no attempt will be made to discuss the complex aspects of the parent education process as it

occurs in the center where this curriculum is implemented. However, the following list will summarize the parent education and involvement activities of the program:

I. Summer Activities

A. Parent letter from teacher on philosophy, goals

B. Summer coffees and discussion

C. Mailing of handbook

II. Orientation Week Activities (no school)

A. Social evening, slide program overview

B. Parent Handbook; discussion of content

1. History; philosophy
2. Parent staff duties, job descriptions
3. Junior group information
4. Senior group information
5. Child development information
6. Children's first reactions to "school"
7. Values of specific preschool activities
8. Guidance techniques
9. Specific limits in the center
10. Nutritional snacks
11. First finger plays and songs
12. Parent library list (annotated)
13. Long-range plans of program
14. First four weeks; intellectual skills
15. Daily schedule

C. Familiarizing Parents With Staff Role

1. Walk through, examine setting
2. General duties in each area
3. Role playing (children's activities)
4. Discussion of staff roles
   a. Importance of parent role; teacher as a resource
   b. Observation notes (how and why)
   c. Discussion of child's folders
   d. Small group time (how and why)
   e. Role play of small group time

f. Discussion of day's schedule
g. Discussion of first four weeks plans and theme
h. Guidance and limits discussion
i. Parent interviews (information sheets on child and on parents as resources)

III. Ongoing Parent Education

A. Monthly newsletter

B. Calling committee

C. Parent library and bulletin board

D. Pre- and post-session staff meetings

E. Parent conferences

F. Monthly inservice and rap sessions

1. Guidance and discipline
2. Active listening
3. Observation and evaluation
4. Behavior modification
5. Pre-writing and reading skills
6. Sex-role sterotyping
7. Readiness for kindergarden
8. Teaching values
9. Fostering creativity

G. Evaluation of program by parents

Much research has been done recently on the values of parent education. The importance of education for parenting has been recognized nationally by the Education Commission of the States and by the National Conference on Parent and Early Childhood Education, as was mentioned in Chapter one of this study.

An excellent review of recent research on "Training Parents as Home Teachers" has been done by Joseph Stevens of

Georgia State University.[32] The reader could obtain this review from the State of Michigan Department of Education Preprimary Specialist, Dr. Shirley Willard, if desired. A request could be sent to her at the State Department of Education in Lansing.

A great deal of work and research in Florida has been done by Ira J. Gordon, early childhood author, educator, and parenting authority. In Florida a state-wide parent involvement program has been developed throughout the public school system.

All of this points to the importance of planning for parent involvement and education by the early childhood curriculum planner.

One very helpful book for early childhood educators which this writer would recommend to those interested in developing parent involvement programs is Ira Gordon's new book, Building Effective Home-School Relationships, published by Allyn and Bacon in 1976.

[32] Joseph H. Stevens, Jr., "Training Parents as Home Teachers: A Review of Research," Paper read at the annual meeting of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, (Anaheim, California November, 1976).

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> To teach young children well you must study children. You must study much subject matter. You also have to be a student of how this country of ours lives...you have to prize curiosity, not want to shut it off...you must treasure individuality... the job is to make individuals strong, not knock them down...you have to be observant...you can't run out of ideas, you have to think on your feet.[33]

SUMMARY

In this paper there has been a discussion of the expanding and varied field of early childhood education and some of the problems and trends in this field. Because of the rapid expansion of early childhood, preprimary, and parent education programs, some problems in this field may not be resolved as quickly as early childhood educators would hope.

One of the prime concerns of early childhood educators is the need for curriculum planning that is based on a thorough knowledge of child development, as well as a knowledge of appropriate planning for meeting the physical, affective, and cognitive needs of children.

The relationship and importance of values and philosophy to the curriculum planning process has been discussed, as well as an overview of differing philosophies of human

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[33] James L. Hymes, Jr., Early Childhood Education (Washington: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1975), pp. 65-71.

development.

This study has attempted to demonstrate the appropriate planning of a preprimary curriculum for four year olds. The curriculum planning process used could also be used as a guide in developing a preprimary program on any level.

In the second chapter, the study has included a statement of philosophy reflecting a humanist and Piagetian orientation, child development considerations for a four year old group, and a detailed discussion of the physical, affective, and cognitive components of the curriculum.

In the section on cognitive curriculum components, the study has clarified five groups of key cognitive experiences for children. In the discussion of these groups, motor, perceptual, language, memory, and problem solving activities were suggested in developmental sequence.

It has been emphasized in this study, particularly in the section on vertical planning, that it is not enough for the curriculum planner to know appropriate experiences for cognitive development. It is also necessary to sequence these experiences in terms of child development from easier to more difficult experiences throughout the year. This requires long-range vertical planning, a knowledge of developmental expectations, and an ongoing observation plan. It also requires a careful attention to planning a balance of activity in each of the five groups of key cognitive experiences.

The study has also included a chapter on observation and evaluation techniques for the preprimary curriculum, and a chapter on parent involvement as it occurs in the program

where this curriculum study was developed.

Throughout the study, references have been made to the original work of the researcher in the appendix which includes the following items:

1. Sequences of Development - skill breakdown for five activities

2. Horizontal planning - Long Range Plans for the Year

3. Vertical planning - Practice in Intellectual Skills - sequential planning for motor, perceptual, language, and memory, and problem solving activities

4. Sample of a Daily Lesson Plan

5. Sample of a Daily Schedule

6. Santa Clara Inventory of Developmental Tasks profile sheet

7. Weekly Observation Form - summary of daily notes

8. Socio-Emotional Growth Checklist

9. Evaluation Form - end of year

CONCLUSIONS

It has been a conclusion of this researcher that more and better ways must be developed for early childhood educators to communicate and to share alternatives for curriculum planning which is based soundly on child development principles.

It is also the feeling of this researcher that state decision makers in education, social services, mental health and public health must place child and family services as a top priority. This move might help more appropriate pre-primary curriculum planning to develop in parent, student, and children's programs.

Another conclusion of this researcher is that while many resources are available to early childhood educators for collecting cognitive experiences, there is not nearly enough direction available for how and when to use this material in terms of child development. It is rather like owning a huge recipe file and not knowing how or when to do the cooking. However, this problem should not occur in using the preplanning process developed in this particular curriculum study.

It is a final conclusion that the writing of specific behavioral objectives is not as important in preprimary education as is the knowledge of appropriate developmental experiences for the physical, affective, and cognitive realms and the ability to sequence these experiences appropriately by horizontal, spontaneous, and long-range vertical planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The early childhood educator must stay abreast of what is happening in the field by belonging to professional organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the state Community Coordinated Child Care organization. It is also important, whenever possible, to be a part of state planning or input groups in early childhood or parent education, such as the State Department of Education Preprimary Referent Group.

The preprimary curriculum planner must study child development thoroughly, develop a philosophy based on values and a theoretical base, and work with these in careful conjunction with curriculum planning.

This researcher suggests that the preprimary planner or teacher develop a personal library, as well as three sets of files. One should be a file of units or themes to use in long-range, horizontal planning. One should be a file of general curriculum ideas for art, music, language, science, dramatic play, outdoor play, creative movement, field trips, and cooking. The other file should be a collection of ideas for specific cognitive experiences in the five key areas of motor, perceptual, language, memory, and problem solving. These files should be constructed so that new ideas can easily be added.

The planner or teacher must continually evaluate the program, the setting, materials, equipment, and schedule with which he or she works and change these when necessary.

The planner or teacher must take time before the program begins to develop long-range plans reflecting rich, horizontal experiences. Detailed, long-range vertical plans with appropriate sequencing of cognitive experiences must also be pre-planned.

After this kind of pre-planning is done, the teacher is able to easily use the daily schedule along with the pre-planning to develop well-balanced daily lesson plans which allow for freedom of flexibility and spontaneity.

In addition the planner must develop an observation and evaluation plan or a needs assessment which will allow constant improvement of the program for the children's benefit.

Finally, the curriculum planner must plan for parent involvement; a good parents program does not simply happen. It is done by reading and studying as much about parenting and parent education as possible. One should also develop, by means of classes or study, human interaction skills such as active listening and values clarification. These skills will foster good interactions with both parents and children.

Early childhood education and parent education is an exciting, challenging field where much work needs to be done, but where there is also a real possiblity to contribute to the solution of problems in education and in our society.

Through early childhood education we can encourage self-confidence, self-direction, independence, and problem solving skills in our children; we can promote physical and mental health; we can help children to learn responsibility for their behavior, self-discipline, and inner control; we can help them to develop trust and empathy for others; and we can broaden children's intellectual horizons and help them to observe, investigate, and to think creatively.

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SEQUENCES OF DEVELOPMENT OR GROWTH

Examples of Experiences

I. Following a Line:

-with eyes and head at first, then with eyes
-with body from one point to another in space (creep, crawl, walk, run)
-with body walking on a line such as on a masking tape line on floor, a rope on floor, a beam on floor
-walking on beam when beam is raised (ht. can be increased, also beam can be slanted, added to other equipt. such as in obstacle course)
-with the arms, using large equipt. such as large trucks, cars, etc.; with pillows to toss, and then balls; using large paint brushes, and using fingerpaint
-with the hands using fingerpaint and brushes
-with the fingers, using crayons, markers, plain paper--then smaller brushes and paint on plain paper, using scissors
-when tracing use fingers only at first, then large marker or grease pencil on a simple template or simple continuous line; then templates or free form shapes can be traced (keep large); later go to ovals and circles, later to other shapes (require stop and change direction) and/or to simple dot to dot games (3 to 9 dots are plenty)

II. Sewing

-string large beads, then large noodles, pieces of cardboard tubes
-string smaller beads, also cereals, noodles
-use simple lacing toys and simple (home made) sewing cards made of masonite, cardboard, styrofoam, framed screen, hooking background and use large shoe laces or rawhide by the yard
-use plastic yarn needles and yarn to sew as above and/or on burlap (use embroidery hoop to hold burlap) later sew on other pieces of burlap or large buttons

III. Cutting

-strengthen muscles of thumb and first fingers by using playdo, clays; also use tongs, eyedroppers, glue squeeze bottles, staplers, hole punches to strengthen these muscles

- many experiences in tearing paper into pieces and shapes for fun and for collage -- tearing can progress from straight to curved line
- snip or fringe around edges of paper (use paper with some body to it)
- cut paper apart with straight lines (not drawn)
- follow straight lines with scissors across paper; then diagonal lines
- cut on simple drawn curves, progressing to sharper curves; also can cut off corners into curves
- cut out circles and ovals; follow crooked drawn lines across paper

IV. Painting

- mixing up of all colors, usually covering whole paper with color (often using one color or having mixture of colors all turn out brown)
- separating colors
- enclosing colors or spaces/ repetition of strokes also begins
- repetition dev. into beginning design and shapes also emerge
- first "pictures" emerge from the above and child usually names or labels picture after it is complete, sometimes telling story of it

V. Stages of Block Play

- Blocks are carried around, not used for construction. This usually applies to the very young child.
- Building begins -- usually in rows, either horizontal (on the floor) or vertical (stacking). Much repetition evident.
- Bridging -- two blocks with a space between them, connected by a third block.
- Enclosures -- blocks placed in such a way that they enclose a space.
  (Bridging and enclosures are among the earliest building problems that children have to solve. They occur soon after a child begins to use blocks regularly.)
- When facility with blocks is acquired, decorative patterns appear. Much symmetry can be observed. Buildings are usually not named.
- Naming of structures for dramatic play begins. Before that, children may also have named their constructions but the names were not necessarily related to the function of the building.

SAMPLE OF A LONG-RANGE YEAR'S PLAN

FOR A FOUR TO FIVE YEAR OLDS PROGRAM

First 12 weeks - September to December

Themes	Cognitive Skills
I. ME Self-image: senses measurement home and family school and friends Field trips: walks	Motor - Large muscle skills Eye muscle skills Beginning small muscle skills and eye-hand coordination
II. My Expanding World Fall: weather seeds and bulbs fruit and colors insects Halloween and applesauce Field trips: walks orchard pumpkin patch	Perceptual - Simple skills in matching and sorting
III. Special Days in My World Fall: colors Dad's open house Indians Thanksgiving Christmas weather and health colors friends	Language - Hearing, listening Speaking and labeling language as fun and enjoyment Memory - Elementary memory skills Visual and auditory Problem Solving - Elementary problem solving skills Associative thinking Classification

Second 10 weeks - January to March

Themes	Cognitive Skills
I. Changes in My World Winter: seasons, weather air water Foods and Cooking: senses shapes and colors changes Field trips: supermarket	Motor - Large and small muscle skills More difficult eye-hand coordination skills Perceptual - Matching skills visual, tactile, auditory
II. How I Understand My World Shapes Sounds Senses	Language - Enjoyable experiences Description development Vocabulary enlargement Communication skills
III. Adults Help in Our World Community helpers: nurse and doctor dentist mailman bus driver city workers - firemen coast guard police Forces: machines tools equipment Transportation Field trips: post office fire station Coast Guard Station city garage school bus garage	Memory Skills - Visual and auditory Problem Solving Skills Associative thinking Beginning work with numerals and patterns More difficult classification skills

Third 10 weeks - March to May

Themes	Cognitive Skills
I. Plants - live and grow in our world Spring weather changes seasons Seeds and cuttings Plants we eat Easter colors eggs Field trips walks	Motor - More difficult skills in large muscle and eye-hand coordination Perceptual - More difficult discrimination skills Memory - More difficult memory skills
II. Animals - live and grow in our world Birds characteristics homes and food Fish and sea animals characteristics adaptation Animals of ponds and woods Mammals characteristics adaptations and homes how they help us Dairy farm and cows help to us dairy products Field trips walks trip to dairy farm	Language - Much more use of language, creatively and in communication as well as in verbalizing and solving problems Problem Solving - More experiences in problem solving More practice in work with numerals classification seriation sequence conservation associative thinking

PRACTICE IN INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

"Me and My World" - First Four Weeks

Motor Skills	Perceptual	Language	Memory	Problem Solving
Using blocks	Using blocks	Talking about "me"	Simple games of "Do What I Do"	Using blocks (parts of whole, construction)
Following a tape or path on floor	Comparing own sizes	Talking about home and family	Recognizing objects and areas by name and function	Water & sand play
Running, walking, stopping	Comparing two objects as to size	Using puppets to talk	Counting birthday years by rote	Beginning to learn time length of some routines in daily schedule
Jumping, climbing, crawling	Matching objects	Hearing new names and vocabulary	Labeling objects we use	Making choices (ongoing all yr.)
Following objects with eyes	Matching colors	Hearing and naming objects we use daily	Listening to stories & talking about them	Measuring and weighing ourselves and objects
Copying body movement games	Use of body parts in puzzle or flannel form	Fingerplays, poems	Songs--unison and call and response type	Recognizing parts of our building by use
Following simple line with toy	Use of simple puzzles	Stories	Fingerplays and beginning to know parts of these	Recognizing parts of body and what body can do
Stacking, nesting toys	Matching textures	Songs (mostly listening to these at first)	Remembering routines and limits	Seeing a simple map (school room)
Stringing large beads and large pegboard toy use	Simple sorting activities	Seeing and talking about objects we find on walks	Learning names of friends	Planning and helping to set up dramatic play
Use of tongs and pinch clothespins; hole punch	Water & sand play	Using flannelboard	Remembering sequence of some parts of day	Planning what to do "next time"
Pouring juice, water and sand play	Clean up time (putting things away in right place is motor-perceptual skill practice as well as memory skill practice)		Fingerplays with counting up to 3 or 5	
Fingerplays and songs using body and fingers	Sensory perception games (simple)			
Fingerpainting, collage and easel painting				
Many experiences w/tearing paper				
Playdo experiences				

PRACTICE IN INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

"Me and My World" - Second Four Weeks

Motor Skills	Perceptual	Language	Memory	Problem Solving
Jumping and balance on one foot	Sorting games w/familiar objects	Talking about our feelings	Learning limits and routines	Parts of a whole (face and body representations)
Hammering	Sorting seeds	Talking about other's feelings	Learning names of objects and friends	Matching objects on 1 to 1 basis up to 5
Folding paper experiences (simple)	Matching textures (more than two)	Use of puppets and the flannel board	Hearing and recognizing familiar sounds	Pick a simple object that is familiar when clues are given
Fingering with scissors and tearing paper	Reproducing simple patterns w/2 to 3 objects (shoes, blocks)	Listening to sounds and to voices	Remembering objects (few) seen, then hidden	Sorting objects in different ways
Making simple puppets	Reproducing very simple patterns with big pegs	Listening to sound direction--finding direction	Remembering and saying songs and fingerplays (with adult)	Simple experiments in science and discussion of these
Eye dropper, easel & table painting	Sorting leaves, acorns, cones	Use of poems, fingerplays, nursery songs, rhymes, stories	Picking familiar object from a group when described	Making playdo and applesauce
Fingerpainting	Simple reproducing games w/2 to 3 play chips, parquetry flannel or blocks (model in view)	Discussing our walks and experiences	Remembering walks in discussion after the walk	Using balance scale to weigh objects
Collages--include objects & gummed paper. Spray painting	Puzzles, large parquetry	Tape recording voices and sounds	Repeating names	Representing feelings in creative movement
Stringing large beads	Matching colors		Discussing sequence of events of day	Use of puzzles (parts of whole)
Clay & playdo squeezing, rolling pinching	Matching pictures to objects		Counting by rote up to 5	Helping set up snack & game times
Following line with finger (games)	Tasting, smelling experiences			Block use
Dripping glue or paint for design	Feeling games (guess object by feel when hidden)			Water and sand play
Stamp printing	Water and sand play			
Using balance beam and climbers, mats				
Using lego blocks pegboards				
Pouring juice				

PRACTICE IN INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

"Me and My World" - Third Four Weeks

Motor Skills	Perceptual	Language	Memory	Problem Solving
Balance beam use & obstacle course	Hearing differences in sounds	Planning for Christmas discussions	Remembering sounds (games)	Sorting music instruments & other objects by common properties
Balance on one foot & hopping	Matching objects w/object or pictures	Simple preposition games - space related	Guessing what has been removed from a group of objects	Mixing colors to see change
Fringing paper with scissors & cutting apart	Matching simple patterns (parquetry, pegs, chips)	Talking about simple pictures	Recalling & doing two tasks, three tasks	Seeing & discussing weather changes & seeing temperature (on thermometer)
Using brace & bit & coping saw w/vise	Matching colors	Use of flannel board & puppets	Repeating sentences	Making cookies, gifts
Using short screw driver in tiles	Using smaller pegboard & pegs, some reproducing simple patterns	Rhymes, finger plays	Answering questions about a story just heard	Matching one to one, up to six objects
Dressing & undressing	Puzzles (more pieces)	Songs	Remembering songs, colors, games, rhymes, etc.	Arrange 2 - 3 objects in a sequence by size
Collage experiences	Parquetry & peg & play plax sorting	Dramatic role play	Naming colors	Making popcorn & jello
Playdo & other clays	Matching objects by texture	Language games	Discussions of sequence-- summer, fall, winter	Simple games of alike & different
All kinds painting and stamp printing	Matching shapes (simple games)	Telling stories (pictures, books used)	Counting by rote to 10	Beginning to evaluate use of time & plan use of time
Tracing around simple objects oval & round	Matching sizes largest, smallest biggest	Stories		Understanding groups or sets of 1, 2, & 3
Water & sand play	Water & sand play			Water & sand play
Lego blocks playplax use				Bldg. structures w/blocks requiring planning & balance
Bldg. structures in all kinds of media (junk bldg. - 3 dimensional)				
Stringing lge. pasta (Rigatoni), some cereals & simple chains for Christmas tree				
Stringing smaller beads				

PRACTICE IN INTELLECTUAL SKILLS — Changes -- Foods, Sounds, Shapes (Five Weeks)

Motor	Perceptual	Language	Memory	Problem Solving
Stringing cereal short fat straws macaroni, smaller beads	Hearing rhyming words	More role playing	Reproduce simple (1 or 2) clapping pattern	Experimenting & seeing changes in weather, air, water, foods
Following a line with a big brush	Matching shapes & colors	Acting out field trips	Repeat sequence of 3 or fewer numbers	Cooking discussing cause & effect
Using tape to build 3D structures	Matching patterns	Naming shapes	Tell a simple story from memory, or	Seeing what happens if--
Using tinker toys & legos, playplax	Games of sensory perception	Counting birthday candles in Spanish	A simple sequence from memory	Matching one to one up to six
Cutting folded paper folded 1 to 4 times	Cooking & tasting	Using & acting out space related prepositions	Tell a past personal experience	Sorting games
Cutting paper apart on straight lines & slashes	Lotto games (simple or 3D)	Describe an object w/two descriptive phrases	Remembering a "path" after clues are gone	What's missing games
Tracing around rounded objects & shapes	Games of discrimination - size, shape, color	Talking of our experiences & our experiments		Understanding objects alike & different
Balance beam games obstacle course	Finding things - picking out what's different	Stories		Arranging three objects in a sequence
Body movement games	Recognizing short, tall, long			
Throw & catch practice				
Use of short saws, hammer, brace and bit				

Note: On this and the following sheets, the use of rhymes, songs, stories, fingerplays, snack preparation, water and sand play is not repeated. Neither is the use of paints, clays, collage, other art media, use of balance beam, mats, climber and obstacle course equipment. Understood that use is ongoing throughout year.

PRACTICE IN INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

ADULTS Community Helpers (Five Weeks)
Forces & Transportation

Motor	Perceptual	Language	Memory	Problem Solving
More stringing pasta, small beads, cereals, straws	Games with rhyming words	More role play	Acting out our trips and helpers roles	Arranging 4 objects in a sequence
Using sewing cards (simple outlines)	Lotto games with very simple pictures	More planning and evaluation discussion	Games where items are remembered	Matching 1 to 1 up to eight
Following a line with smaller brush	More on tasting healing touching smelling	Using more prepositions and descriptive phrases	Games with nursery rhymes (mixed up)	Explaining why a picture does not belong in a group of pictures
Bounce and catch	Matching like sounds	Games with completing statements	Reproduce simple clapping pattern	Some simple conservation games
Movement and balance games - some galloping	Matching harder patterns	Acting out stories we like	Recognizing sounds	Construct groups to match numerals under 5
Cutting simple curves on paper	Finding pictures on a given subject	Expanding vocabulary by new experiments and experiences	Recall 2 to 3 tasks and do them	Games of "What would you do if----"
3D building with plastic wood and paper	Sorting pictures	Talking about our feelings	Answer questions about a visitor or experience	Experiments with forces, tools & equipment
Using manipulative toys that are harder	Matching wide - narrow		Reconstruct a sequence from memory of 3 parts	Who helps when---- games
More complex use of balance beam and obstacle course	Traffic signs			

Did not repeat use of stories, rhymes, songs, fingerplays in Language and Memory.
Understood that we use all year.

PRACTICE IN INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

PLANTS (Five Weeks)

Motor

Throw, bounce catch

Gallop

Cutting curves

Following lines with crayon, payon & magic marker--sometimes using templates & tracing cards

Tracing shapes using templates

Sewing yarn into burlap

Beginning to thread large yarn needle and shoelaces

Perceptual

Sorting pictures to find given subject

Recognizing own first name

Begin to practice left and right movement

Matching more complex designs

Matching symbols and forms

Lotto games

Recognizing numerals 1 to 5

Matching sizes

Language

Language games

Telling past experiences

Planning experiences

Talking about experiments & causes and effects

Making up stories, rhymes, poems, or dialogue

Discussing opposites

Talking about yesterday and tomorrow (or last time you were here and next time you come)

Memory

Discussion of sequence of holidays and seasons

Reconstruct simple design from memory

Reproducing harder rhythm patterns

Practice in doing three tasks given verbally (moving)

Colors and how to mix them

Repeat sequence of 5 numbers or 2-3 nonsense words

Problem Solving

Seeing weather changes

Sprouting seeds & rooting experiments (cause & effect)

Use of science & experiments to discuss in small groups (associative thinking)

Talking about first, middle, & last

Games of conservation

Constructing sets or groups to match numerals 1 to 5

Placing pictures in sequence (not a familiar story) of three parts

Planning walks, trips, & activities

Matching 1 to 1 up to ten

PRACTICE IN INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

Motor

Ball "games"

Batting, gallop & skip (begin)

Jumping over a rope

Cutting circles

Cutting out on a line

Copying shapes w/crayon or magic marker (circle, oval, & cross)

Sewing 2 pieces of material together w/yarn if interest warrants this

Beginning to tie shoe laces

Beginning to print name (if interest warrants this)

Copying simple symbols if development & interest are there (not necessary for these to be numerals or letters)

Perceptual

(Beginning to match) numerals and letters

Recognize first name

Practice in left or right discrimination

Lotto games (harder)

Using symbols in play

Finding letters that are in own first name (if interest and development is there)

Isolating visual images

Match direction of a design

ANIMALS (Five Weeks)

Language

Talking about our experiments and experiences, plants and animals (associative thought)

Talking about opposing conditions

Making up dialogue, stories, poems, and songs -- using descriptive language

Talking about yesterday and tomorrow, etc.

Defining words

Memory

Sequence of words games

Reconstruct sequences and designs from memory (3 part)

Answer questions about story we've heard

Practice in repeating rhythm sequences

Naming (recognizing) numerals 1 to 10

Talking about plants and animals -- new vocabulary remembered

Problem Solving

Placing pictures in sequence (not familiar story) of 5-7 parts

Planning activities and trips

Comparing animals and their homes, adaptations

Constructing group to match numerals 5-10 if skills and interest warrant this

Conservation games -- use of more and less

Point out first, last, and middle of 3 to 5 objects or pictures

Sorting objects in more than one way

SAMPLE DAILY LESSON PLAN

FOR FOUR - FIVE YEAR OLDS PROGRAM

A. Large Muscle Area

Choose one:
1. Hop Skip Chart or Obstacle Course
2. Use unit blocks with small cars and trucks
3. In area where there is no rug or by door, set up either:
   a. place to experiment with battery, or
   b. "office" for play

Sorting wood - a good job (if someone needs one) that needs to be done

Music and/or record and instruments or dance can be used if you wish also, during free choice time

B. Art Area

Easel - if you don't think it will be too much for you

Wooden table - either play dough to see how color changes when two colors are mixed together (if so, we will make some new to add) or magic markers and paper and crayons

Other two tables together - either 3D paper and junk sculpture and tape, or fingerpaint, use powder with plain play dough - let children help set up and wet own paper

C. Small Muscle Area

Snack - Have a choice of two kinds of crackers and offer cream cheese and peanut butter. During snack, look at and discuss our roots on cuttings and pussy willows.

On table - (as soon as I get out of your way after cooking play dough - if I have to leave this, can you help cook it?) choices of:
Montessori Toy (blindfolded is fun)
Beads on string in tube for memory practice game
Chips and cubes with patterns

On rug - a construction material such as play plax or tinker toys. Keep an eye on needs in doll or book corner areas. We may need to add water play in doll corner.

GAME Grouping - a problem-solving skill - requires memory generalizing, categorizing. Only open-ended questions should be asked, if any. "Tell me some things about it"

or "them" is best. "Ways we might put some of them together." All answers are OK if reasons are given. Participation by all is goal.

Two ways to stall, if needed - grouping selves as to sex, hair color, etc. or ask riddle about one of the objects, i.e., "What is made of metal, makes a sound, and does a job when we use it."

TEACHER Transition ideas - "Do what I do" and/or finger plays - also "Grow Little Seeds" (act out)
"Name Game" song and other favorites to use with guitar
"The Plant Sitter" story
Talk about planting our inside garden next time.

OUTSIDE Take out some equipment such as gym, balance beam, balls and rope - and see if tulips are now coming up. We may have time to get the earth ready for our indoor garden.

Note: This lesson plan is for a day in early April with a group of 20 four to five year olds.

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

For Four - Five Year Olds Program

NOTE: Although blocks of time are indicated, these are meant as guidelines, not hard or fast rules. To meet the individual needs of children, a daily program or schedule should be flexible.

8:30
12:30 Pre-session conference to discuss goals or special plans for the day as well as to receive guidance from the teacher as to both child directed (free) time and small group time.

9:00
1:00 Greeting, planning, and getting started

9:10 to 10:15
1:10 to 2:15 Child directed activities in all interest areas: First 1/2 hour outdoor art activity may be offered.

9:40 - 10:10)
1:40 - 2:10) Snack (open or free method)

10:10 or 2:10 Suggest that we will be cleaning up soon so that we can have "game" (small group) time.

10:15 or 2:15 Clean up

10:20 to 10:30
2:20 to 2:30 Adult directed small group time for practice of cognitive skills for the day as decided by teacher (motor, perceptual, language, memory, and problem solving).

10:30
2:30 Transition and teacher directed time (large group) for active movement, rhythms, music, stories (progression active to quiet).

10:50
2:50 Outdoor play

11:05
3:05 Transition to wait for car pools (fingerplays, songs, goodbyes)

11:10
3:10 Children leave. Adults begin meeting with teacher to discuss the day, ask questions, turn in notes and observations.

Post session conference.

SAMPLE OF A WEEKLY OBSERVATION FORM

Name_____

Week of_____

Games:

Monday-

Wednesday-

Friday-

SKILLS PRACTICED

Motor	Perceptual	Language	Problem Solving	Memory

Learning Areas Used:

A. Large Muscle Area
- obstacle course
- mattress
- balance beam
- fix-it man
- fishing with magnets
- trucks
- rocking boat
- big hollow blocks
- unit blocks
- throwing and catching
- using measuring devices
- using nuts and bolts
- using pipes and joints
- climber

B. Art Area
- playdo or clay
- sand
- easel painting
- junk (structural) building
- fingerpaint
- crayons or magic markers
- collage
- paper and paste with scissors
- other tempra painting
- gummed paper with scissors

C. Small Muscle Area
- peg boards
- puzzles
- legos
- colorforms
- playtiles
- flannel boards
- parquetry
- water play
- playplax
- stringing
- sorting games
- sewing
- shapes
- memory games
- lotto
- Etch-a-sketch

Books

alone
with other children
with adult

Science

animals
battery
cooking
plants
magnets
magnifying glass

Woodworking

hammer and nails
screwdrivers and screws
saws
drill

Dramatic Play

housekeeping
doll house

Comments or special activities and visitors should be added below or on another sheet:

Sample of a
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL GROWTH
Observation Checklist

Child_____Birthdate_____

	Unable to Observe	Very Seldom	About half of the time	Usually
SELF CONFIDENCE				
Talks about self, family, friends feeling of identity, belonging				
Enjoys mastering a skill, solving a problem or helping solve one				
Expresses feelings, opinions, and ideas - incl. range of feelings				
Describes self in varying, positive ways				
Trust - seeks relationships and interactions w/adults and peers				
Demonstrates creative self expression through use of				
language				
body movement				
dramatic play				
art media				
materials and equipment				

	Unable to Observe	Very Seldom	About half of the time	Usually
AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE Involves self deeply in play/task				
Functions independently to carry out age appropriate activity of interest to self or group				
Seeks out persons, ideas, and/or materials				
Can separate comfortably from family when brought to center				
Adjusts to new persons, events, routines or change in schedule				
COPING Demonstrates development of inner control and frustration tolerance				
Plans time and activities				
Self directed - selects from alternatives available independently				
Functions both independently and as a group member				
Developing understanding of own limitations as well as own capabilities				
Enjoys experimenting with materials, ideas, communication				

SOCIAL GROWTH	Unable to Observe	Very Seldom	About half of the time	Usually
Seeks approval or reinforcement from adults				
Asks questions of adults or seeks information when needed - adult as resource -				
Initiates interaction or conversation w/adults				
Initiates activities w/peers				
Seeks partners and/or forms friendships and interacts				
Seeks information from peers				
Able to take turns with others				
Aware of needs or feelings of others, beginning or empathy and concern for others				
Can enter into and participate in small group situation				
Can enter into and participate in large group situation or activity comfortably				
Able to listen to others' ideas or conversation in group and interested in what they have to say				
Able to understand the rules or limits set on behavior and use of materials in center				

DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE

Santa Clara Inventory
of
Developmental Tasks

DIRECTIONS TO THE TEACHER: This is the record form on which each child's performance is recorded. The column for Testing Dates allows the teacher to measure each category up to three times; however, if the student exhibits mastery when first observed, only one date is entered. The abbreviations mean: M.C. = Motor Coordination, V.M.P. = Visual Motor Performance, V.P. = Visual Perception, V.M. = Visual Memory, A.P. = Auditory Perception, A.M. = Auditory Memory, L.D. = Language Development, C.D. = Conceptual Development. The scoring criteria for each task are listed in the Observation Guide.

Name_____ Birthdate_____

School_____ Teacher_____ Grade____

Testing Dates:

C.D.			
L.D.			
A.M.			
A.P.			
V.M.			
V.P.			
V.M.P.			
M.C.			

Scoring:
0 – Almost never
1 – Some of the time
2 – Most of the time

| | | |

SAMPLE END-OF-YEAR EVALUATION FORM

Teacher_____ Student_____ Date_____

1. Personal growth and concept of self:

2. Response to new situations, materials or routines:

3. Behavior in group situations and participation in group activities:

4. Accepting direction and cooperation with adults:

5. What activities does the child most enjoy - or avoid:

6. Development of self-direction and self-discipline:

   accepting responsibility for own behavior

   verbalizing and solving own problems

   planning use of time

   coping with strong feelings

   independence in play and handling materials

7. Awareness of needs or feelings of others:

8. Cognitive skills:

   language (listening and speaking)

   large muscle

   fine motor

   perceptual

   memory